



The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Civil Society (CSO) Guide

A short primer to help you make the most of your experience

What

The annual meeting within the United Nations (UN) system that prepares reports and makes recommendations on matters concerning gender equality and the rights of all women and girls. The CSW brings together representatives from UN Member States, civil society organizations (you) and UN entities to collaborate around written Agreed Conclusions to an annually chosen theme.

Priority Theme: The priority theme this year is:

“Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes”

Review Theme:

“Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work”

When March 14th-25th 2022

Where 405 E 42nd St. (46th St & 1st Ave)
New York, NY 10017
and [Online spaces](#)



Accessible via public transportation from the 4 and 5 trains at Grand Central Station

A Brief History

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was founded in 1946 and is a “functional commission” of the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It advises them on issues related to gender and sexuality alongside UN Women (more details [here](#)).

In 1996, the Commission became the lead monitor in assessing progress and gaps in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (read more on this [here](#)).

The Bureau of the Commission

The Bureau of the Commission plays a crucial role in facilitating the preparation for, and in ensuring the successful outcome of the annual sessions of the Commission.

For this year’s CSW, South Africa will serve as the Chair with Argentina, Germany, Latvia, and the Republic of Korea serving as Vice-Chairs. Germany, as one of the Vice-Chairs, will be facilitating the negotiations for the main outcome document of the CSW, the Agreed Conclusions.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at CSW

Since 2016 the CSW has also focused on measuring gender-related progress within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While all of the SDGs are relevant to gender, the CSW often focuses in particular on measuring progress towards Goal 5:

“Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls”

More info about [SDG 5 here](#).

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) at the CSW

Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LBTIQ) women, transgender and gender non-conforming persons continue to experience human rights violations because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC). These violations perpetrated against individuals based on their real or perceived SOGIESC include killings, violent attacks, torture, arbitrary detention, forced marriage, and nonconsensual surgical interventions, in addition to denial of rights to assembly and expression and discrimination in accessing health care, education, employment and housing. These factors, combined with others such as broader notions of patriarchy and negative aspects of dominant economic models, work to erode all women's human rights.

LBTIQ women, trans and gender non-conforming persons around the world are often excluded from the benefits of many international development investments and have also suffered from a foreclosed definition of "women" in the CSW. We recognize that LBTIQ women, trans and gender non-conforming persons face gender-based violence and discrimination. We push for an inclusive and non-binary definition of gender, we include people with diverse sex characteristics in our work, address harmful gender norms, stereotypes and roles that contribute to exclusion, and we push for a definition of "woman" that is intersectional and multifaceted, and therefore includes and protects LBTIQ women, trans and gender non-conforming persons as well.

Civil Society Organizations at the CSW

At the CSW, you will be able to collaborate with like-minded organizations and partners, such as progressive SRHR, environmental, and indigenous rights organizations, to create coalitions centered on specific topics that can have a potentially significant impact as a group resulting from shared networks, expertise, resources, and influence. These coalitions play an important role in contributing to the Agreed Conclusions and advocating for key priorities with UN Member States. These interactions at the national level help to hold governments accountable to their international obligations.

It should be noted, however, that there are also many CSOs that attend the CSW who may have different or even opposing views than our networks. It is important for all those attending to understand this reality and prepare themselves for possible encounters with these organizations. Activists should prioritize personal safety and wellbeing at the CSW and when possible should look out for one another to ensure that the CSW is a safe and enjoyable experience.

Side Events: They're Important

Limited numbers of CSOs are included in the public sessions, and some are asked to make statements to the Commission. Because of this, for many, your primary involvement as a CSO at the CSW will come in the form of Side Events, which are parallel events either organized by civil society or Member States, all of which will be held online this year. These events offer vital opportunities for CSOs to contribute to the overall dialogue, even if their areas of expertise and focus are not included in the current CSW theme or outcome. Do not underestimate the importance of networking and side events. Building solidarity is a critical part of the mission of the CSW. Set realistic goals for your advocacy during the session and focus on building relationships.

Making the Most of your CSW

- 1. Relate your advocacy back to the CSW Theme**
 - » To maximize your impact, it is essential that you familiarize yourself with the priority theme and keep it in mind. Align your advocacy with the theme so that it fits into the context of this CSW.
- 2. Relate your advocacy back to the Sustainable Development Goals**
 - » In its current iteration, the UN Body remains focused primarily on the SDGs. It would be useful to frame your advocacy in these terms.
- 3. Contact your Foreign Ministry and Ministry for Women/Gender**
 - » If it is safe and possible for you, make contact with your Foreign Ministry and Ministry for Women/Gender, or any other government you have access to, to let them know that you will be attending the CSW.
- 4. Become familiar with the CSW proposed organization of work and advocacy entry points**
 - » General Written Statement:
Deadline – October 15th 2021
 - » Speech during general discussion:
Deadline – February 7th 2022
 - » Intervention during interactive expert panels: Deadline – February 14th 2022
 - » Influencing Ministerial Declaration Interventions in Ministerial Roundtable:
As soon as possible
- 5. Establishing contact and arranging meetings with Ministerial Delegation and UN Mission representatives**
 - » Find out about the CSW delegation and key priorities. This will help you to make the most of your attendance and make your work known.

The UN Bluebook for contact information is available [here](#).

Here are some questions for you to ask:

- 1. What are the country's key priorities?**
- 2. Who is on the country's CSW delegation?**
- 3. Who is the country's chosen representative on the CSO delegation?**
- 4. Can we arrange a meeting?**

A Few More Useful Links

[CSW66 Official Page](#)

[UN Women's Expert Report](#)

[UN Secretary General's Report on CSW66 Priority Theme](#)

[UN Secretary General's Report on HIV and AIDS Prior Agreed Conclusions](#)

[Virtual Side event schedule CSW66](#)

OutRight Action International works at global, regional and national levels to eradicate the persecution, inequality and violence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) people around the world. With staff in over 10 countries and headquarters in New York, OutRight builds capacity of LGBTIQ movements, documents human rights violations, advocates for inclusion and equality, and holds leaders accountable for protecting the rights of LGBTIQ people everywhere. OutRight was founded in 1990 and has recognized consultative status at the United Nations.

For more information:

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